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Every Day is Child Health Day

A radio interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, Mr. James B. Hasselman, Office of Marketing and Regulatory Work, and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, broadcast Thursday, May 9, 1940, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, by the National Broadcasting Company and a network of 92 associate radio stations.

WALLACE KADDERLY:

Yes, Everett Mitchell is right. Several members of the Washington branch of the Farm and Home family are on hand here... all looking very cheerful. Maybe the weather is partly responsible. Anyway we have real spring at last in your nation's capital.

And now here's Ruth Van Deman ... very cheerful and unruffled, though again this week we had to ask her to change from her regular day (Tuesday).

But, Ruth, no matter what the day or what the weather you always have something interesting and worth while to report from the Bureau of Home Economics.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

The days of the week don't matter much to us, Wallace. We have too much else to think about ... many irons in the fire ... many kettles simmering on the stove -- many cooperative projects needing attention.

And just to give a progress report on one of these cooperative jobs, Mr. Hasselman's come over with me today ... to talk about the school lunch program the Department of Agriculture is fostering, to use surplus commodities.

KADDERLY:

So that's how you tie-in here, Jimmie ... on the school lunch program. That is a cooperative undertaking ... all the way through.

Just to keep the record straight, Jim, I should say James B. Hasselman, one of the men very much concerned with the marketing of agricultural surpluses.

JAMES B. HASSELMAN:

Never mind about the name, Wallace. ... James, Jimmie, Jim, I answer to any one ... or all three.

And you're right about this school lunch program being cooperative. It depends on cooperation first of all in the local community ... between the school board, and local sponsors

VAN DEMAN:

Isn't the P.T.A. oftentimes that sponsor?

HASSELMAN:

Yes, the Parent-Teacher Association has often been one of the prime movers in this plan to feed the undernourished children.

VAN DEMAN:

I wish you could say that before the national association of parents and teachers holding their annual congress in Omaha this week.

HASSELMAN:

I'm sure somebody is saying it. The P.T.A., national or local, has every reason to feel proud. With their help and the help of other local, State, and Federal agencies, about three million children in more than 30,000 schools have sat down to a good substantial school lunch this winter.

VAN DEMAN:

Three million children who otherwise might have gone hungry.

HASSELMAN:

Yes, for many a kid this lunch at school was the only decent meal he had in the 24 hours.

VAN DEMAN:

But it hasn't been handed out as charity.

HASSELMAN:

Not at all. It's been handled so that all the children in a school get the lunches, without any distinction between undernourished children and others.

VAN DEMAN:

The local committees managed that, by having those who could afford to pay, contribute to the sponsor's fund ... that is, the parents contributed.

HASSELMAN:

That's right. The kids themselves don't know who pays and who eats free.

VAN DEMAN:

The only right way to run such things, of course.

HASSELMAN:

The surplus foods bought by the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation, are the backbone of this school lunch program. It acts two ways. It helps farmers market the foods they purchase in abundance. And it helps to build up the health of future generations. By the way, this school lunch program covers every State in the Union and the District of Columbia.

VAN DEMAN:

And some of the islands of the sea, didn't you tell me?

HASSELMAN:

Yes, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

VAN DEMAN:

We're very glad there are so many "protective" foods among the surplus commodities ... butter, eggs, oranges and other fruits, and vegetables in season. When money gets scarce those are things a family often cuts down on first.

HASSELMAN:

Like letting the insurance lapse.

VAN DEMAN:

Very much like that. These foods are a kind of insurance. They "insure" against malnutrition and the whole chain of troubles that come from poor diet.

So we're especially glad, Mr. Hasselman, to work with you people on this surplus commodity program ... to plan menus and work out quantity recipes to use in school lunchrooms. We'd like to see every bowl of soup, every sandwich, every hot dish, just as full of food value as the best dietitian can make it.

HASSELMAN:

The recipes you've worked out certainly meet that standard. Those sample foods you home economics people cooked and served the day the regional people were in for conference lived up to that. And they tasted mighty good.

VAN DEMAN:

After all, of course, that's the real test. Food can be as scientific and full of vitamins as you please. But if it's to do its job right, it has to taste good.

Mrs. Carpenter and Mrs. Yeatman worked very hard on these new recipes. They tried to hold them pretty much to surplus commodities, and what can be cooked on top of the stove.

HASSELMAN:

That's right. The fewer the pots and pans, the better for these school lunchrooms..... Well, I know these recipes and menus are going to be a big help to the lunchroom managers, when they are published.

KADDERLY:

May I put in a question here?

HASSELMAN:

Certainly, Wallace.

KADDERLY:

Ruth, I guess this is really a question for you. Jimmie Hasselman just said when these menus and recipes for school lunches are published. Is that in the future?

VAN DEMAN:

This is a progress report.

KADDERLY:

But I thought you already had a bulletin to help the manager of a school lunchroom.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, but this new one is going to be bigger and better. And it's built chiefly around the surplus commodities.

KADDERLY:

But until this new one comes out, you'll be glad to send the old one?

VAN DEMAN:

Delighted, yes. And it has something especially for nursery school managers ... a whole set of menus and recipes for noon meals for nursery schools, in quantity to serve 25 youngsters. Lots of nursery schools run right through the summer.

HASSELMAN:

We're hoping to keep some of these other school lunch projects running this summer, too. This country has the food. And we have the hungry youngsters who need the food.

VAN DEMAN:

And it's only humanity to bring the two together.

HASSELMAN:

That's the way it seems to us.

VAN DEMAN:

Wallace, since you have such a good memory for bulletins, maybe you recognize this one.

KADDERLY:

"Well-Nourished Children!" Certainly I remember this ... very well. This is the blue-and-white folder that made its first bow May Day ... Child Health Day ... a year ago.

VAN DEMAN:

I thought so ... right to the day.

KADDERLY:

Is this available today?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, any day is child health day.

HASSELMAN:

And make it every day in the year, if we're going to lick this problem of having America well fed.

VAN DEMAN:

Wallace, here's something else maybe you remember ... this recipe for preserving children. You read it once as part of a May Day - Child Health program ... and you did such a grand job

KADDERLY:

So you want me to read this again. Is that it?

VAN DEMAN:

Please.

KADDERLY:

"To preserve children, take one large grassy field, half a dozen children, two or three small dogs, and a pinch of brook and pebbles. Mix the children and dogs well together, stirring constantly. Pour the brook over the pebbles, sprinkle the field with flowers; spread over all a deep blue sky, and bake in the sun. When brown, remove the children, and set them to cool in a bath tub."

VAN DEMAN:

Thank you, Wallace. I think we'll have to make that an annual event ...

KADDERLY:

That's certainly all right with me. I could use that recipe myself.

VAN DEMAN:

Unfortunately, the person who wrote this recipe for preserving children didn't sign her name.

KADDERLY:

Her name?.....

VAN DEMAN:

Aren't women the chief recipe writers?

KADDERLY:

I guess right.

Well, Farm and Home friends, (ad lib offer of "Menus and Recipes for Lunches at School" and "Well-nourished Children.")

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